

unprecedented damage to the Gulf Coast, including my home state of Alabama. Americans will never forget the images of storms that overwhelmed a city and region and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless and destroyed its infrastructure, including schools and educational facilities.

However, Congress would be shortsighted if we don't recognize that natural disasters happen across the country, across all seasons. Whether it's wildfires in the west, floods in the Midwest, ice storms in the north, hurricanes in the Gulf, or tornadoes throughout the country, our schools are also damaged when Mother Nature strikes.

The specific need for this amendment came to my attention because of the ongoing struggles that a community in my district has experienced. On March 1, 2007, a tornado ripped through the town of Enterprise, Alabama. In the middle of its 180-meter path of damage was Enterprise High School, full of children going about their daily routines and preparing themselves for their futures. The tornado left eight children dead, and left a community devastated by more than just material losses.

Over two years after the tornado, Enterprise is still struggling to fully rebuild, and the memories of those departed weigh heavily on the minds of the city and surrounding Coffee County. The high school continues to conduct classes out of nearby Enterprise-Ozark Community College. Though construction for a new school is underway, the city and school board has exhausted most of their options for fully funding the rebuilding of the school. Whenever I talk to Mayor Ken Boswell and Superintendent Jim Reese, finding a way to get Enterprise High School reopened as quickly as possible is always at the top of their priority list.

I cite the example in Enterprise because I'm sure other school districts across the country will experience similar issues as they recover from natural disasters. Over the past two months, my district alone has seen flooding and storms that have led to at least one federal disaster declaration. Small towns across America are simply not equipped to rebuild a mainstay in their communities like schools when they are destroyed by natural disasters. This is a way for the federal government to lend a helping hand to school districts in need.

Moreover, I am a believer in the old adage "if you're going to do something, do it right." Rebuilding and repairing these schools to 21st Century and environmentally efficient standards will help create a positive and healthy learning experience for our students. The families and students who utilize these schools will be able to take pride in them for years to come.

In closing, I would like to thank Chairman MILLER and his staff on the Education and Labor Committee for their attention to this issue and working with my staff to help draft this amendment. I would also like to thank the Rules Committee for ruling in favor of the amendment and allowing me to present it on the floor today. Finally, I thank my colleagues from Texas HENRY CUELLAR and AL GREEN for their continuing support and commitment on this issue.

I urge passage of this amendment, and passage of the final bill.

ALEXANDER WATSON

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2009*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alexander Watson who has received the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Alexander Watson is a senior at Pomona High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alexander Watson is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Alexander Watson for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication he has shown in his academic career to his future accomplishments.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE RIGHT TO A SECOND MEDICAL OPINION ACT OF 2009

**HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2009*

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Right to a Second Medical Opinion Act of 2009 to ensure the accessibility and coverage of medical second opinions.

Imagine that your doctor tells you that you must undergo surgery that may threaten the use of a limb or leave you with a serious chronic condition. It is only natural to want a second opinion from another doctor when facing such a serious health event.

Besides giving patients much-needed peace of mind, second opinions can benefit health plans by reducing the number of invasive procedures and result in better patient care through increased dialogue about treatment options. Some health care groups see the value in such requests and provide patients with a second opinion.

When I was a member of the California State Assembly, I heard from a number of patients who experienced a glitch in their health care coverage. They noticed the absence of a clear process for obtaining medical second opinions. These patients, many struggling with challenging health conditions, had difficulties obtaining second opinions through their health plans.

After meeting with patients, physicians and health groups, I authored a law in California that guarantees coverage of second opinions. The law in California was a good first step. Unfortunately, only a small number of states have similar laws on the books. It is time to extend second opinion coverage to health plans nationwide.

Americans deserve quality and comprehensive health care coverage. I urge you, Madam Speaker, and all of my colleagues to pass this critical legislation into law.

A TRIBUTE TO BILLIE WESTERNOFF, CALAVERAS COUNTY RESOURCE CONNECTION FOOD BANK DIRECTOR

**HON. DANIEL E. LUNGREN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2009*

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Billie Westernoff, who is retiring after 20 years of dedicated service at the Calaveras County Connection Food Bank.

Ms. Westernoff's career at this important community facility has been solely based on her desire to serve the public. Her vibrant personality and remarkable ability to connect with people have brought national recognition to the food bank. Furthermore, her determination to provide comprehensive programs and services related to nutrition, prevention and intervention for families in Calaveras County has strengthened my district and our Nation.

Let me also say that in 2007, Ms. Westernoff testified before Congress on the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables as a part of a child's daily diet. As a result of her testimony, the Mother Infant Child Harvest program was piloted in Calaveras County and served as the model for the federal Women Infant Children program nationally.

Her dynamic focus and ability to inspire others to assist individuals in need will be her legacy. It is an honor to recognize Billie Westernoff for her immense dedication to improving the quality of life for so many individuals and for her commitment to collaboration and equality. She has served my district and our Nation proudly.

#### INDIAN ELECTIONS

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2009*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I want to commend the people of India on their successful election concluded Saturday. I want to congratulate Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his United Progressive Alliance for winning the most seats, 262, in what is a month long voting process with as many as 700 million eligible voters.

Prime Minister Singh has been instrumental in forging a stronger alliance between India, the world's largest democracy, and the United States, the world's oldest democracy—including the U.S.-India civilian nuclear agreement which will mean jobs and cleaner energy for both our nations. As evidenced by the vibrant success of Indian Americans in American commerce and society, the shared values of our two nations are stronger than ever before.

I have met Prime Minister Singh in New Delhi and Washington, and I wish him and the people of India much success moving forward. There are tremendous challenges in that region, but I know that working together with their neighbors and allies, India can have a bright future.